

From: Cynthia Giles-AA/DC/USEPA/US
Sent: 1/22/2012 1:26:36 PM
To: Steven Chester/DC/USEPA/US@EPA
CC:
Subject: Fw: AP and Scranton Times Tribune stories on today's Dimock water delivery

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----- Forwarded by Cynthia Giles-AA/DC/USEPA/US on 01/22/2012 01:26 PM -----

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Date: 01/21/2012 05:21 PM
Subject: Re: AP and Scranton Times Tribune stories on today's Dimock water delivery

Ex. 5 - Deliberative

Four Points on EPA Sampling Decision at Dimock, PA

Cabot Oil & Gas Corporation and others look forward to continuing our efforts to coordinate with the Dimock community and with state and federal regulators to address concerns regarding shale development in the area. We are disappointed that the federal EPA has undertaken a course regarding water sampling that seems inconsistent with what is known about Dimock and what was recommended by state regulators. EPA's zig-zag approach has caused confusion that undermines important policy goals of the United States to ensure safe, reliable, secure and clean energy sources from domestic natural gas.

Here are four important points to consider:

- EPA has presented no credible evidence to suggest that its new sampling initiative is a wise use of resources given the collection and analysis of over 2000 water wells that has already occurred in the area. More than ten thousands pages of this data have been provided to EPA.
- EPA's concerns are inconsistent with the findings of state regulators who have concluded after extensive investigation that Dimock drinking water meets regulatory standards. State regulators are closest to the facts, and most familiar with ground water and geological formations in the area.
- EPA's initiative marks a change in position for the Agency, unsupported by any new facts. As recently as December 2011, EPA told Dimock residents that their drinking water did not present a health threat.
- What is needed is an objective approach to dealing with community concerns - something missing in recent EPA actions. EPA's changing posture on sampling in

Dimock is indicative of a broader problem of inconsistency with scientific process and a lack of cooperation with state and private sector parties. Cabot hopes that we can work with EPA to further review existing data and to establish a firmer basis for Agency decision making.

Robert M. Sussman
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US Environmental Protection Agency

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Date: 01/21/2012 10:53 AM
Subject: AP and Scranton Times Tribune stories on today's Dimock water delivery

AP: Water delivered to Pa. village with tainted wells

A tanker truck has made its first delivery of fresh water to four homes in a northeastern Pennsylvania village where federal regulators say they found arsenic and chemicals often used in gas drilling in the well water.

The Environmental Protection Agency paid for Friday's delivery in Dimock, Susquehanna County, after reviewing water sampling data that regulators say revealed high levels of pollution in residential wells.

Anti-drilling activists hailed the EPA move at a news conference.

But Houston-based driller Cabot Oil & Gas Corp., the company blamed for the polluting the wells, issued a statement criticizing EPA for its involvement, saying state regulators had already determined the residents' water met federal regulatory standards. Cabot also noted that EPA told the residents less than two months ago their water was safe.

Scranton Times: EPA water deliveries arrive in Dimock

By Laura Legere (Staff Writer)

Published: January 21, 2012

DIMOCK TWP. - The first tanker of water from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reached Carter Road on Friday in what will become a regular delivery to four homes as federal regulators investigate the impact of natural gas drilling on drinking water here.

Encouraged by supporters of the affected families who were cheering its arrival, the turquoise truck stopped in front of the Sautner home with a double blast of its horn before contractors unrolled a hose and started to fill a bulk tank in the yard. The delivery came a day after the federal agency announced it will conduct its own sampling of 61 water wells in a 9-square-mile area of Dimock after its review of data collected by the state, gas driller Cabot Oil & Gas Corp. and other firms raised concerns about groundwater contamination connected to Cabot's expansive drilling operations in the area. The deliveries of water drawn in Easton may stop or expand to other homes, depending on what the EPA discovers through its sampling, beginning with the four homes where an EPA toxicologist said past results raised either "potential" or "imminent and substantial" health concerns. Other homes to be tested include 17 properties where the state found methane from faulty Cabot wells seeping into water supplies, 30 homes in the immediate area that have been sampled in the past and 10 homes where evidence of health impacts may be connected to contaminated groundwater or where new data could fill past gaps, the agency said.

The EPA has invited both the state and Cabot to perform simultaneous sampling at the water wells it tests, Community Involvement Coordinator Trish Taylor said.

The state Department of Environmental Protection wants to take simultaneous samples at the 61 homes, spokeswoman Katherine Gresh said, but it was rejected by a "significant number" of homeowners on Friday when staff members called for permission to access their water wells.

"We've let EPA know this and will work to analyze additional water samples that they intend to take on those properties and give to us," she said.

Cabot spokesman George Stark said the company has accepted the EPA's offer even as it criticized the agency's actions.

The company denies causing any contamination in Dimock and says the water quality reflects natural conditions. Cabot released a statement Friday saying it is "disappointed" in the EPA's sampling program, which it called "inconsistent" with state regulators' findings and EPA's own earlier statements about the quality of the water.

"What is needed is an objective approach to dealing with community concerns - something missing in recent EPA actions," the statement said. "EPA's changing posture on sampling in Dimock is indicative of a broader problem of inconsistency with scientific process and a lack of cooperation with state and private sector parties."

The deliveries Friday were met by families and drilling critics rallying in support of the EPA's actions who accused state regulators of failing to help them and enabling bad practices by the industry.

"The EPA's stated policy is to step in where states have failed to enforce," filmmaker Josh Fox said, "which means the state of Pennsylvania and Gov. Tom Corbett has failed in its obligation to protect the citizens of Pennsylvania."

Ms. Gresh said any statement that DEP has failed the homeowners is "absolutely inaccurate and is not grounded in reality."

"DEP has upheld the law on behalf of the affected homeowners in Dimock every step of the way," she said. "Every resident has been given an opportunity to have their water supply repaired or replaced" through a December 2010 settlement between DEP and Cabot. That settlement, which replaced an earlier state-sponsored plan to provide Dimock residents with a public waterline, also required Cabot to pay more than \$4 million into escrow accounts for the families. Dimock residents urged federal regulators to supply water to more families, especially four of eight families to whom water deliveries were promised by the EPA two weeks ago and then almost immediately revoked. Some of those same families were mistakenly told Thursday they would be receiving water, then received calls later apologizing for the error.

Ms. Taylor, who said she made many of those calls, admitted "there was some miscommunication and we were not prepared" when the first promises were made.

"We wanted to be able to provide water to people we knew were running out of water," she said. "We tried to get a water truck set up and have it deliver, but it did fall through."

The four homes on the original list that are not receiving water will be sampled first before the EPA decides if water deliveries are necessary, she said. She emphasized that EPA headquarters is "very aware" of what the Philadelphia-based regional office is doing.

"It is a national concern," she said.